

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of present claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A method for deproteinizing chitosan, comprising the steps of:
 - a) reacting an acidic solution of chitosan, said chitosan containing proteins ≥ 0.001 wt%, with an aqueous base to precipitate microcrystalline chitosan[[:]], and adding a first aqueous basic solution to reach $6.0 \leq \text{pH} \leq 6.5$ and then adding a second aqueous basic solution, wherein the concentration ratio of alkali in said first aqueous basic solution to said second aqueous basic solution is between 1:0.1 to 1:0.9; and
 - b) separating said precipitated microcrystalline chitosan from dissolved proteins to produce a microcrystalline chitosan having a protein content ≤ 10 ppm.
2. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said acidic solution of chitosan comprises an acid selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, acetic acid and lactic acid.
3. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said aqueous base is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, sodium carbonate, and potassium carbonate.

4. (canceled) A method according to claim 1, wherein said reacting step is carried out at $6.0 \leq \text{pH} \leq 6.5$.
5. (canceled) A method according to claim, 1 wherein said reacting step further comprise adding a first aqueous basic solution to reach $6.0 \leq \text{pH} \leq 6.5$ and then adding a second aqueous basic solution, wherein the concentration ratio of alkali in said first aqueous basic solution to said second aqueous basic solution is between 1:0.1 to 1:0.9.
6. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said separating step is carried out using a method selected form the group consisting of filtration, ultrafiltration, sedimentation and centrifugation.
7. (original) A composition of matter, comprising a chitosan prepared according to a method according to claim 1.